



For Immediate Release
December 12, 2013

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**SAN JOSE AWARDED \$25,000 CITIES OF SERVICE GRANT TO IMPLEMENT
AMIGOS' READER LEADERS AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM**

*Grant Funds, Provided by Bloomberg Philanthropies, Will Support an "Impact Volunteering"
Initiative Designed to Improve 3rd Grade Reading Proficiency in San Jose*

[San Jose, Calif.] - After receiving a record-number of applications, [Cities of Service](#) announced that it has awarded a \$25,000 grant to implement the **Amigos' Reader Leaders** program, a San Jose service initiative designed help improve reading proficiency among high-need students in the underserved Mayfair community. San Jose is one of 23 U.S. cities to win a *Cities of Service Impact Volunteering Fund* grant, which supports mayors who are implementing "impact volunteering" strategies that tackle pressing local challenges.

"San Jose has a tradition of embracing the power of volunteerism and our residents' immense talents to address the most daunting challenges facing our community," said Mayor Chuck Reed. "I'd like to thank Cities of Service and Bloomberg Philanthropies for providing this generous grant to support a promising volunteer-based program that can help make a measureable impact in our drive to raise student achievement throughout the city."

Amigos' Reader Leaders engages adult and student volunteers to work one-on-one with K-3rd grade students to improve their reading comprehension skills and offers weekly workshops that empower parents to better support their child's learning and development. The program is based in the Mayfair community, a predominantly low-income neighborhood where academic achievement lags behind other parts of the city and the state as a whole. Just 14% of students are ready for Kindergarten and only 27% of students scored proficiently on their 3rd grade English Language Arts Standardized Test (*Source: Applied Survey Research, CA Department of Education*).

The \$25,000 *Cities of Service* grant will help **Amigos' Reader Leaders** engage 25 volunteer mentors to provide 120 students with two-to-three hours of after-school programming each day. The grant will also allow the program to reach three dozen parents in ongoing engagement activities. Program advocates hope that these efforts will help participating students improve their reading levels by 1-1½ years and increase overall reading proficiency in the Mayfair community by 4.5 percent.

The **Amigos' Reader Leaders** program is run by *Amigos de Guadalupe*, a faith-based community coalition affiliated with Our Lady of Guadalupe Church and a partner in Mayor Reed's initiative (SJ2020) to eliminate the educational achievement gap in San Jose.

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“Amigos de Guadalupe is thrilled to support Mayor Reed's vision to close the achievement gap,” said Maritza Maldonado, Director of Amigos’ Reader Leaders. “This grant will bring much needed resources into a community that has always had the will, but has often lacked the necessary resources to garner the support of its members to affect positive change. This grant will enable us to build capacity that can help sustain the Mayfair community into the future.”

The *Cities of Service* model focuses on impact volunteering – volunteer strategies that target community needs, use best practices, and set clear, measurable outcomes to gauge progress. Dozens of cities across the nation have adopted the model since its introduction in 2009. Cities that received first round grants from the *Cities of Service Impact Volunteering Fund* in October 2012 already have shown success leveraging volunteers across a range of issue areas. For example, Fall River, MA created its first urban tree farm to support ongoing revitalization efforts; Austin, TX surveyed 10% of city-owned land to identify invasive plant species for removal to protect the local environment; and Little Rock, AR is engaging more than 3,000 elementary school students in a comprehensive anti-obesity and healthy eating initiative to improve health outcomes.

More than 60 mayors applied for *Cities of Service Impact Volunteering Fund* grants to support the implementation of nearly 90 initiatives. Grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$100,000 also will support efforts in Allentown, PA; Atlanta, GA; Austin, TX; Birmingham, AL; Buffalo, NY; Campton Hills, IL; Charleston, SC; Fall River, MA; Flint, MI; Hartford, CT; Hayward, CA; Kalamazoo, MI; Kansas City, KS; Louisville, KY; Mesa, AZ; Milwaukee, WI; Nashville, TN; Orlando, FL; Philadelphia, PA; Richmond, CA; Utica, NY; and Washington, DC.

Funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies, the *Cities of Service Impact Volunteering Fund* is a multi-million dollar fund. Nearly \$1 million was awarded through the first round of grants in October 2012, with an additional \$1 million awarded through this second round. Grantee cities were selected based on the quality of initiative proposals, scale and potential for impact, and caliber of implementation plans, among other criteria. *Cities of Service Impact Volunteering Fund* initiatives address issues in the Cities of Service priority areas of education and youth, health, neighborhood revitalization, preparedness and safety, sustainability, and veterans.

About Cities of Service

Founded in September 2009 in New York City by New York Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and 16 other mayors from across the nation, Cities of Service is a bipartisan coalition of over 180 mayors committed to addressing critical city needs through impact volunteering. American cities face serious challenges and many mayors want to take advantage of every resource available to them – including the time and energy of public-spirited residents – to address those challenges. But in cities across America today, citizen service is often an underutilized strategy by municipal governments. By leveraging citizen service strategies, Cities of Service helps mayors address local needs and make government more effective. To find out more about Cities of Service, visit our website at www.citiesofservice.org or follow us on Twitter [@CitiesOfService](https://twitter.com/CitiesOfService).

About the City of San Jose

Known as the Capital of Silicon Valley, San Jose is the nation's tenth largest city and the largest city in Northern California with an ethnically diverse population of 985,000. San Jose was founded in 1777, once served as the state capital of California, and now encompasses 180 square miles. The City's website is www.sanjoseca.gov.

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